



Second Unitarian Church of Omaha

Second Thoughts

January, 2014

Join Us This Sunday!

Worship Services
9:30 and 11:30 a.m.

**Fellowship and
Refreshments**
10:30 - 11:15 a.m.

Social Justice Summit

**Saturday,
January 18**
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
@ Project Harmony
(see page 4)

**The Power of Music
Workshop**
**Wednesday,
January 29, 7 p.m.**
(see page 5)

**Sing for Your
Supper**
**Saturday,
February 1, 6 p.m.**
(see page 5)

January 5

Rev. Scott McNeill

Out of Chaos, Life Is Being Found...or Made

Ever have something bad happen, only to think or hear, “Everything happens for a reason”? I’m not sure I agree! January’s theme of the month is *Creation* and I can’t help wondering about how and why humans were created.

Regardless of whether there was a reason for our creation, I believe that we make sense of and find purpose in the lives we live – and *that’s* what binds us together during these far-too-short lives.

January 12

Presented by “**Writing for Spiritual Growth**”

With the monthly theme of *Creation*, our church will use this Sunday and January 26 to reflect on different types of creation and spirituality: writing and music. There is power in the written word, and in the ability to write and reflect our lives. Join us as we worship with writing.

January 19

Rev. Scott McNeill & Jacqui Williams

The Servant as Leader

On this Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend, we reflect on our work to create justice. Dr. King said not to strive for greatness out of ambition, but that when we are in service to one another, *that’s* how we achieve greatness. So often, we delay working on justice because we don’t feel we have the right beliefs or qualifications. But he reminded us, “You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love.” This week’s worship with Jacqui Williams encourages us to connect to our grace and to serve our community in love.

January 26

Music & Worship

Making a Joyful Noise

Music touches our lives in ways that art, writing, and images cannot. Some of us like it loud, others soft. Some are a little bit country, others a little bit rock ‘n’ roll. Our worship this morning encourages us to listen deeper to the music in our lives, finding the sacred within the songs and separating the notes

Second Thoughts is a publication of Second Unitarian Church of Omaha.

Please send articles and submissions to info@2Uomaha.org.

Deadline is the fifteenth of each month.



Minister's Musings

By Rev. Scott McNeill

“What’s happening at the church; and, why should it matter to me?”

A key part of Unitarian Universalism has always been a commitment to the democratic principles that members of a community should have a say in the community’s business. As Unitarian Universalists, we acknowledge the work of our church is informed by other Unitarian Universalists (both members and churches) but isn’t instructed by those outside structures. Therefore, the programs and ministry of our church have a responsibility to speak to the needs of its members (past, present, and future).

Why did I just tell you this? Because 2014 is an important year for Second Unitarian Church of Omaha!

Starting in January, our congregation will begin some reflection and discernment about what our church should look like, in different areas. In 2008, the church held a Social Justice Empowerment Workshop which focused our work on three particular areas. Members of the church came together to reflect on Omaha’s needs and our passions. However, in the six years since that workshop, our church has called a new minister, hired new staff, and welcomed dozens of new members to our community.

So, on January 18 we will begin a conversation that celebrates the work we’ve done and looks forward as we figure out how we can partner with the world to create justice. Part of our calling as Unitarian Universalists is to bring our stories and experiences to the table and explore what unites us, even in our diversity. There are many areas where we can do this, but social justice is a critical component of our faith; so we urge you to join us on January 18 and attend any of the following discussions we hold to discuss our justice work.

In addition to the Social Justice work we will undertake, our congregation will receive recommendations for how we can be strategic in our work over the next three to five years. For more than a year, our Strategic Planning committee has been learning, listening, and leading our church to finding and being its best self. While many strategic plans (at least in the past) focused on specific tasks to be completed by target dates, this plan concerns itself with broader goals for the congregation: understanding what it means to be a UU by growing as individuals and as an institution, and engaging lay members and professional staff in doing the work of ministry.

Together, these two projects hope to connect people on a substantial level. We recognize that in our hectic world time and energy can be difficult to spare, but we are committed to the idea that by building and strengthening relationships, our lives can be better. Recently Stephanie Peterson pointed me to a blog entry that said (in part), “Church happens when folks who think differently from each other have no computer to hide behind and are forced to shake hands. There is no shortcut to church. It’s slow, and it’s real life, and you have to show up for it (<http://momastery.com/blog/2013/12/22/6664/>).”

I invite each and every one of you to make this church the best it can be – by showing up. If you feel like social justice isn’t your thing – join us, you have good insight to share about your life. If you feel like we’re not doing enough for social justice – join us! You, too, have good insight to share. We want people to speak, hear, and share the good news of Unitarian Universalism – and to continue building this church so that those who need our faith can find us, this beacon of hope.

Together, we will build something great.

In faith,

Rev. Scott



Planks and Slivers from the Board

By JoAnne Draper, Chair, Board of Trustees



*“Now is the moment of magic,
when the whole, round earth
turns again toward the sun,
and here’s a blessing:
the days will be longer and brighter now,
even before the winter settles in to chill us.
Now is the moment of magic,
and here’s a blessing:
we already possess all the gifts we need:
we’ve already received our presents:
ears to hear music,
eyes to behold lights,
hands to build true peace on earth
and to hold each other tight in love.”*

— Excerpts from “The Moment of Magic” by Victoria Stafford

Yes, as we turn to another new year, it is a time of magic. We will be having discussion about not only 2014 but also beyond as the Strategic Plan rolls out. Special applause goes to that team of Carol Johnson, Stephanie Peterson, Craig Piquette, and Rev Scott. Social Justice is having a Summit on January 18 and on February 1 is our famous Sing for Your Supper.

I want to express our appreciation to all the many dedicated volunteers who give of their talents, time, and treasure to our community. And of course our wonderful staff who takes such great care of us. *Thank you all* for many “moments of magic”!

JoAnne



Share the Plate for January: Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures

One half of Second Unitarian's offering received in January will go to the Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures.

The Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures promotes, supports, and advocates research to advance our quality of life and economy. They believe that any stem cell research, therapies, or cures that are permitted by federal law should be allowed in Nebraska, provided those activities are conducted ethically and safely and do not involve human reproductive cloning. NCLC concentrates on education and support of research, and advocates for awareness of Nebraska-based medical research and the improvement in people’s lives that research provides. Visit www.nebraskacures.com

To nominate an organization for our Share the Plate program, visit the church website or contact the Social Justice Coordinating Council or Rev. Scott.



Treasurer's Report

By Pat Caffrey, Treasurer

Second Unitarian Church
Treasurer's Report
Month End for November 30, 2013

YTD Pledge Income/Current Year: \$84,023.39
reflects 46.21% of \$181,841.00 Total Pledged for 2013-14.

YTD New Pledge Income/Current Year: \$3,891.00
reflects 46.21% \$9,000.00 (6) New Pledges for 2013-14.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	<u>October</u>	<u>Year-To-Date</u>
Income	\$18,620.70	\$104,541.72
Expenses	-\$16,483.15	-\$ 79,985.30
Net Over/Short	<u>\$ 2,137.55</u>	<u>\$ 25,556.42</u>

If you would like more detailed financial statements, please contact me.

Thank you!
Treasurer
Pat Caffrey

Second Unitarian Church - Social Justice Summit
Saturday, January 18
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
offsite at **Project Harmony**
(one of our many Share the Plate partners)
11949 Q Street

All are invited and encouraged to attend!

This is an opportunity for all of us as members and friends of Second Unitarian Church to consider what we are doing as an institution and as individuals to create a more just and caring world. What do we want to do as a religious community to put our faith into practice, to bring our mission into reality?

Guest Facilitator will be Jacqui Williams, a member of First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany.

The Library Committee prepared a list of books from our library – feel free to check out a book and enjoy a bit of reading!

Thanks to the generosity of members of Second Unitarian Church, we will be able to sponsor \$1,400 worth of spots on KIOS, 91.5 FM. We are working with the station to determine the most effective placement. Thank you!

Nancy Amsler, Marketing Advisory Council



Sing for Your Supper! ***Saturday, February 1, 6 p.m.***

It's time to chase away those winter blues!

All talented Second Unitarian Church members, affiliates, and visitors! Polish your musical talents (singing, dancing, instrumental), poetry writing, recitation, and dramatic or humorous readings, or whatever you do.

This is your opportunity to perform at Second Unitarian's annual **SING FOR YOUR SUPPER, this year on Saturday, February 1.**

An audience is a must, so please come even if you are not performing - we need everyone! Fellowship will furnish bread and beverages - please bring soup or dessert to share.

The meal will start at 6:00 p.m. with entertainment to follow.

Second Circle Teen Movie

By Anita Meyer

The teens will be viewing these movies on upcoming Sundays:

Sunday, January 19, 4:30 p.m., "Win Win"

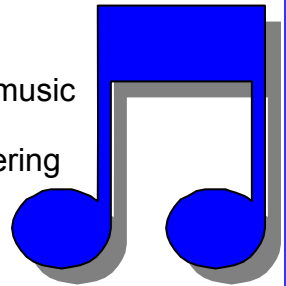
Sunday, February 16, 4:30 p.m., "Good Will Hunting"

The Power of Music

Music is an integral part of life as we celebrate, when we grieve, when we worship, as we march together for a cause. But were you aware of the power of music in medicine? Music Therapy is a clinical and evidence based therapy similar to occupational and physical therapy. And there are good results for patients recovering from strokes, injury, or disease.

The Caring Committee is sponsoring a workshop at church **Wednesday evening, January 29, at 7 p.m.** on "The Power of Music." Emily Wadhams, a music therapist, will be our presenter.

Please plan to attend. It's fascinating to learn what Music Therapy has done for patients and their families dealing with Alzheimer's, dementia, neurological disorders, and recovering stroke victims.



- Dodie Robison



Our Vote on Study Action Issues January 26

by Vicki Pratt, Social Justice Coordinating Council

Second Unitarian Church of Omaha participates in the Unitarian Universalist Association's Social Witness process. This process is how our denomination arrives at consensus on articulating our position on major issues. It's called the Social Witness process because we, as congregations as well as the national office, call attention to social and economic inequities.

Congregations mark their ballot to place up to five issues on the General Assembly agenda for voting by delegates sent by each congregation. Delegates select one of the five as the new Study/Action Issue. After three years of congregational study and feedback, the Commission on Social Witness drafts a Statement of Conscience and actions. The Statement of Conscience is our position on the issue.

Congregations then mark their ballot for whether to place the wording for this Statement of Conscience on the General Assembly agenda. Delegates vote whether to adopt the Statement of Conscience.

Everyone is invited to hear about the issues and participate in Second Unitarian's decision on Sunday, January 26 at 12:45 p.m., following a light lunch.

This year there are six issues on the 2014 ballot:

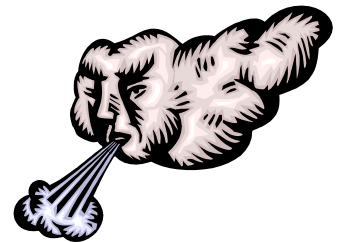
- Empowerment: Age and Ability Reconsidered
- Ending the War on Terror
- Escalating Inequality
- Gun Violence: A Public Health Issue
- Renewing and Securing Our American Democracy
- UU Values and the Pursuit of a Just Peace for Israelis and Palestinians

For the balloting to be valid 25% of congregations must vote, so your attendance is crucial to our participation in this process.

Weather-Related Cancellations

If weather or road conditions cause services or a major church event to be cancelled, we will notify you by:

1. Placing a message on the church phone (402-334-0537),
2. Sending a message to the weekly email list,
3. Sending a message on Facebook, and
4. Placing a message on the church website (www.2Uomaha.org).



In case of a Service cancellation, we will also contact local media with our information.

If you arrive at church and experience patches of ice on the walks and parking lot, deicer and sand are located in the foyer under the coat rack. Feel free to use them or alert a member of Building & Grounds to treat the ice. A shovel and broom are also available for snow.



Connecting Our Congregation to Our Larger Faith

by Vicki Pratt, Denominational Connections Chair

This month focuses on getting together with other Unitarian Universalists for family vacations as well as education, inspiration, justice-making, and worship. Keep these opportunities in mind while planning your summer vacation.



Start a fun family tradition of a week in the woods at **Camp UniStar**. Located on Star Island in Class Lake, Minnesota, Camp UniStar has been hosting UU families for 50 years.

Accessible only by water, this is a real getaway. The camp owns several water craft for campers' use. Campers stay in cabins with a basic kitchen and eat communal meals in the dining hall.

Programs feature family weeks (all ages) and youth weeks for grades 7-12. There's a different theme for each family week – trees, yoga, art and jazz, birds. There's also lots of free time for swimming, volleyball, or just relaxing.

Find more details at www.campunistar.org.

Midwest Leadership School, located on the campus of Beloit College in southern Wisconsin, is for adults and youth (grades 9-12). Intensive training in leadership as well as UU identity and understanding prepares participants for leading congregations. Offered once a year, July 13-19, this experience can be life changing.

More details are at www.mwls.org



For a family or individual outing, attend **Regional Assembly** in Topeka, Kansas, April 11-13. Partial listing of events: justice workshops, worship, keynote address "Reclaiming Prophetic Witness: Liberal Religion in the Public Square," community social action, tour of the Brown vs Board of Education National Historic Site, children and youth programming.

Details are at www.midamericauua.org/events/regional-assembly/topeka

SAVE THE DATE - March 2, 2014

*Special Joint Sunday Service for
Stewardship Commitment Sunday, followed by Potluck
Beveridge Middle School - 120th & Shirley*

*Special Guest Speaker:
The Rev. John T. Crestwell, Jr.
Associate Minister of Outreach, Leadership, and Evangelism
The Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis, MD*



Service Learning Project for January

By Anita Jeck & Rev. Scott McNeill

In December, we began making blankets as our Service Learning Project. We learned about Project Harmony and the work they do in support of children who have been abused or neglected and their families. On January 18, our church is hosting an important Social Justice Summit regarding our future work in Social Justice. This workshop (on Martin Luther King weekend) will be at Project Harmony so that we can have plenty of space, including an accessible entrance for anyone who would join us. The gifts we created in December (and will continue to create in January) will be given to Project Harmony, both as a thank you to them and as a way to support and offer physical and emotional comfort to children.

The mission of Project Harmony, located near 120th & Q Street, is “To protect and support children, collaborate with professionals and engage the community to end child abuse and neglect.” Second Unitarian Church will be supporting their mission by making fleece blankets to be given to children facing emergency foster placement. These blankets provide some small measure of comfort, caring, and security amidst a confusing and highly stressful situation.

You can still contribute to this effort: by attending another “tying session” for all ages to make additional blankets on Sunday, January 26, at 10 a.m. at the Millard Library, 13214 Westwood Lane, just south of 132nd and Center Street.

Thank you for your help with this project! Please direct questions to Anita Meyer, Anita Jeck, or Interim DRE Molly Kliment-Jenkins at dre@2uomaha.org or 402-334-0537 ext. 112.

PRIVACY POLICY FOR CHURCH PUBLICATIONS

As stated in church policies: *Respect for the privacy of members, friends, and visitors is a primary consideration. When newsletter submissions contain personal information (phone number, street address, email address, etc.), it is the author's responsibility to get the subject's permission to publish this information.* Since many of our communications are transmitted electronically and information therein may more easily be re-transmitted, it's essential that any personal information be approved for inclusion.

In general, it's preferable to omit personal information, but in those cases where it's necessary (such as a location for an offsite meeting), those who submit articles should ask for permission to publish the personal information. An alternative is "Please call or email the church office for contact information." Contact the Office Administrator for more information.

Regarding published photographs: If you do not want your photo published (including in the newsletter or on the website), please inform the Office Administrator in writing. Thanks!

Writing for Spiritual Growth is a great opportunity to express your creative side in a safe and nurturing environment. No special skills are required, just a desire to put pen to paper and explore.

Part of Spiritual Growth is asking questions; writing is a great way to go deeper into those questions and to share them with others. Writing can reveal things that we weren't consciously aware of, or give us perspective on difficult life situations.

Not that we need to be terribly serious about it all! Playfulness and humor are sometimes the best way to get past our fears and doubts. We'll be writing poems, essays, and stories. There will be both writing games and opportunities to let the stream of consciousness flow freely. Sometimes we'll really challenge ourselves, and sometimes we'll just share humorous personal experiences.

Please join us on the second Saturday of each month from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. We meet downstairs. Please see Pete Miller if you have any questions.



Lifespan Religious Growth & Learning

By Molly Kliment-Jenkins, Interim Director of Religious Education



SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT IS GETTING FLEECE: Project Harmony Quilts

At the end of December and again in January, the Service Learning Project is making fleece quilts for Project Harmony, a service that helps children in emergency foster care situations feel safe and comfortable. These are quilts that will be given to them. If you would like to help us cut the fleece, please [contact me](#) for information. If you'd like to join in the tying, attend the Service Learning Project at the Millard Branch Library.

COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS TREE CHALICE ORNAMENTS

If you attended church on December 22, you received a chalice ornament made by the children in our RE program! Special thanks goes out to Anita Jeck for finding the chalice cookie cutters and making the base for the chalice ornaments - not only did they provide a blank canvas for our creativity, they smelled great, too!

CLASSROOM MAKEOVER (and consequences for us adults)

In the process of making our spaces function better for our children during Sundays and to accommodate our growing attendance, both the pre-K (Chalice Children) space as well as our Holiday and Holy Days (Elementary) spaces were modified. A second table was added to the Chalice Children's room (hopefully with more legroom for those of us who are "taller" than the average pre-k student). In the Fellowship Hall, many things were moved around, resulting in a cozy area for the youth to have their chalice and check-in time that's out of Sunday service traffic.

If you use that space and move the tables from their "L" configuration for meetings and such during the week, please place them back in that orientation by Sunday. If you need extra seating, the brown stacking chairs are behind the southeast door to that room. Chalices from various areas have been collected and displayed on top of the piano for the moment so we can enjoy and use them. *Please do not light the chalice at that location:* bring it to the table and light it there for meetings. As a reminder, lighters are located next to the door frame high up inside the DRE office. Please return them to those hooks when you are finished.

Hope you all survived your holidays, travel and general December society craziness! Welcome to January and the peace that comes with a new year and the seriously cold weather.

CHILDCARE OPPORTUNITIES for YOUTH and ADULTS

We will be offering a childcare training class for our youth in January or February. If you have a teen who is interested in providing childcare, please keep an eye out for the training date or [email](#) me your or your youth's contact information and I'll add them to a list to specifically contact once details are worked out. We will be reviewing locations of emergency supplies, sign some important paperwork and doing some role playing with various scenarios. Please encourage your youth to contribute to our congregation in this paid position! Those who complete the training will be given preference in scheduling.

We are also looking for adults to assist in the nursery, specifically on days when Kaitlyn is on vacation or for special events. Please let me know if you are interested. You are welcome to come to the above training or to meet with me in person to review paperwork.

With hope and joy for your 2014,

Molly



Retirees' Group

By Carol Johnson

Retirees' Group meets **Tuesday, January 14, at 1:00 p.m.** to view a 76-minute DVD, "Two Who Dared."

In February, 1939, Waitstill and Martha Sharp left for Czechoslovakia on a dangerous mission to save imperiled human lives. What drove this young Unitarian minister and his wife, from Wellesley, Massachusetts, to put the well being of strangers over that of themselves and their family?

Drawing on recorded interviews, letters and unpublished memoirs, as well as first person refugee accounts, "Two Who Dared" chronicles the Sharps' remarkable journey. This timeless story reveals a heartfelt lesson of sacrifice and faith to be shared with future generations.

All are welcome!

Meditation Reincarnated

By Kevin Dunlop

In his book, Savor, Buddhist monk and author Thich Nhat Hanh writes, "We all have bad days when everything seems to go wrong. After such a long day, we feel tired, discouraged, and down. We might have an urge to have some comfort food - a pint of ice cream, say, or some chocolate chip cookies or a bag of chips. At times like these, it is best simply to return to our body through mindful breathing, cut off all external contact, and close the door of the senses. Following our breathing, we can collect our mind, body, and breath, and they will become one."

Mindful breathing is a simple and basic skill that the Meditation Reincarnated group is always learning about and practicing. We are currently using the book Savor as a study tool.

Meditation Reincarnated meets in the church downstairs on the **fourth Thursday of each month at 7:45 p.m.** to learn about and practice meditation. Both the book and our meditation practice are designed for everyone, whether monk or beginner. No previous meditation experience is necessary, and we invite you to come and check us out. Our next meeting will be on **Thursday, January 23**, and we will discuss chapter 7 of this book.

Even if you haven't read any or all of the book, please feel free to come to our meeting, as there are plenty of beneficial things to discuss and learn.

Inventory of Church Property

By Vicki Pratt

Like every other family household, Second Unitarian has a list of "*round to its*" – tasks that aren't critical enough to do right now but after it's too late you wish you would have gotten round to it sooner. One of those tasks has been to count, record, and document every item on the church property so we can quickly file an insurance claim if the church is destroyed or damaged.

A team from Finance Committee and Retirees' Group got round to it this fall. Thanks to photographers Joan Benziger and Shirley Rundquist and documentarian Vicki Pratt, we now have pictures and a list of every item stored in every drawer and on every shelf in every storage closet! The pictures and list are stored in the church safety deposit box. The Office Administrator also has a searchable inventory file.

Among the interesting finds: a piece of heirloom cutlery misplaced four years ago after a Social Justice Movie Night; an envelope of screws and bolts for the benches on the front deck misplaced two years ago when they were taken apart for restraining; 46 clipboards in various sizes, and 19 chalices that hold candles or oil.

The team found many duplicate items stored in multiple places. So before a committee buys something new, ask the Office Administrator to run a search to find out if we already own one, or several. (*OA Note: We'll have "Where Is It?" lists posted throughout the church soon!*)



Staff

Rev. Scott McNeill, *Minister*

Office hours by appointment
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Second Thoughts Staff: Rev. Scott McNeill,
Nancy Amsler, Richard Koelling, Betty Segell,
Tom Peterson, Gary Emenitove

<i>Attendance</i>				
Date	Adults in Worship	Adults in R.E.	Children in R.E.	Service Learning
12/1	79	9	15	--
12/8	54	8	7	--
12/15	89	6	13	--
12/22	85	<i>Intergenerational</i>		

Second Unitarian Church of Omaha
3012 South 119th Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68144
402-334-0537
www.2Uomaha.org

- Travel and stay in homes of people who share your ideals
- Learn about hosting people in your home to earn extra money

The UU bed and breakfast directory *UU're Home* (formerly *Homecomings*) offers a network of hosts in the United States (and a few abroad) who enjoy meeting new friends and are happy to open their home to like-minded people. Travel to different cities and stay in reasonably priced accommodations or become a host and enjoy meeting new friends.

For more information, visit
www.UUreHome.com
or write to
info@uurehome.com



www.UUreHome.com
43 Vermont Court
Asheville, NC 28806
828-281-3253

Second Unitarian Church

3012 S. 119th Street

Omaha, NE 68144

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**MISSION STATEMENT
SECOND UNITARIAN CHURCH OF OMAHA**

“Our Mission is to be Authentic, Compassionate, and Transformative in our lives, in our faith, and in the world.”

Adopted May 20, 2012